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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/SPG, S/CRS, AF SE WILLIAMSON
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SENSITIVE
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TAGS: PGOV PREL MARR KPKO SOCI AU UNSC SU
SUBJECT: SAF AND SPLA DECLARE EACH OTHER'S REDEPLOYMENTS INCOMPLETE

REFERENCE: (A) KHARTOUM 0026
(B) 07 KHARTOUM 2003
(C) 07 KHARTOUM 1928

¶11. (SBU) Two weeks after the January 9 deadline for troop redeployment, and despite high-profile media announcements by both armies that they had redeployed their troops, now both the SAF and the SPLA have begun accusing each other of not fully withdrawing. One of the National Congress Party's most prominent Misseriya Arab members, Dirdeiry Mohammed Ahmed, told poloffs January 16 that more than 20,000 SPLA troops still occupy areas north of the 1/1/56 border in Southern Kordofan. Dirdeiry acknowledged that the SPLA had largely withdrawn from Blue Nile State, but claimed they had moved into "contested areas" that both the north and south claim along the border. SPLA spokesman James Hoth claimed to the media and repeated to CG/Juba officers that 500 Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) remained in the south and that other SAF troops are within 10 to 20 kilometers of the 1/1/56 border.

¶12. (SBU) UNMIS Chief Operations Officer Ajay Singh told poloff on January 21 that once the UN has completed its verification process, the verification statistics will be submitted to the Ceasefire Joint Monitoring Commission (CJMC) for review. He said that the next CJMC meeting is scheduled for January 29. UN Force Commander Lt. General Jasper Singh Lidder told emboffs that he welcomed the SAF and SPLA force redeployment announcements but since none have been verified by the UN or the joint monitoring verification teams, claims of redeployment are premature.

¶13. (SBU) International NGO officials told poloff January 16 that some SPLA troops have withdrawn from South Kordofan, but local Nuba militia remains. Since the SPLA controls one faction of the local militia, the NGO officials expressed concern that the local militia will continue to be a source of instability, especially in light of the recent fighting in and around Abyei. International NGO contacts in Blue Nile State said that while the SPLA has not totally withdrawn, there is a "dramatic decrease" in the number of SPLA troops and those who remain are still moving south as of January 20.

¶14. (SBU) Comment: In the days before the January 9 deadline, both sides said that meeting the deadline would be difficult because of the large number of the troops and the difficult terrain. The widely-publicized announcements on January 9 of movements of large numbers of troops surprised the UN, in part because neither side had met any of the agreed interim monitoring steps (ref B) nor submitted movement plans to the UN or to the Sector Joint Military Committees. It appears that the redeployments are far from complete and must be verified. The piecemeal initiatives by both sides to move their troops, however, should be viewed positively while realizing that process is incomplete and the possibility of unintended military confrontation remains. End comment.

FERNANDEZ